

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Las Vegas area businesses recognized as Start! Fit-Friendly Companies

- Companies recognized for employee wellness programs; included in *Forbes* magazine

LAS VEGAS, October 31 — Four Las Vegas area businesses have been recognized by the American Heart Association's Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program for promoting physical activity and health in the workplace. Both the City of Las Vegas and Nevada Cancer Institute were recognized as Platinum Award winners, while International Game Technology (IGT) and Henderson-based The Greenspun Corporation, earned Gold Award recognition.

"These companies should all be applauded for their successful efforts to create healthier worksites," said Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman. "I know that we are honored and excited to be recognized by the American Heart Association's Start! movement as a Start! Fit Friendly Company," Mayor Goodman added. "Through the city of Las Vegas' Wellness Program city employees have lost more than 6,000 pounds and walked more than 61,000 miles since the inception of the program. The program helps keep our employees healthy and produces positive results for the organization overall."

Adult Americans spend the majority of their waking hours at work, many in sedentary careers — amplifying the risk for medical problems such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Obesity alone costs American businesses \$12.7 billion in medical expenses and \$225.8 billion in health-related productivity losses per year.

"Time constraints and job responsibilities are employees' biggest obstacles to exercising. That's why the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies program encourages employers to allow employees to walk while at work," said Dean Collins, City National Bank Vice-President and member of the American Heart Association's Las Vegas Division board. "Walking has the lowest dropout rate of any physical activity.

"Furthermore, studies suggest that implementing a worksite physical activity program and promoting a culture of physical activity will help companies increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, lower turnover and reduce hard costs," Collins added. Research shows that employers can save \$16 for every \$1 they spend on health and wellness.

Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program participants implement various options to encourage physical activity, nutrition and culture enhancements such as on-site walking routes, healthy food options in cafeterias and vending machines, annual employee health risk assessments and online tracking tools.

A special advertising section in the Oct. 27, 2008 issue of *Forbes* magazine (currently available at newsstands) includes a list of the over 900 companies recognized as Start! Fit-Friendly in 2008.

Companies interested in joining the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program should contact the American Heart Association's Las Vegas Division office at (702) 367-1366 or visit www.americanheart.org/start to download an application. Applications are due in January for review by a volunteer expert panel. The panel consists of seven physicians, all of whom are American Heart Association volunteers.

Start! is sponsored nationally by SUBWAY® restaurants, Healthy Choice® and AstraZeneca. For more information about the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program, visit heart.org/start.

For more detailed information about how the companies noted in this press release are working to create and promote physical activity and health in the workplace through the American Heart Association's Start! Fit Friendly Companies program, please feel free to contact them directly. The list is below:

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The Greenspun Corporation

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About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart disease and stroke. These diseases, America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases claim nearly 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2006–07 the association invested more than \$554 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit [**americanheart.org**](http://americanheart.org).